



NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF THE STATE'S ATTORNEY FOR HOWARD COUNTY

For Immediate Release:

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Man Sentenced to Home Detention for Large Marijuana Grow Operation

A 49-year-old Glenelg man, convicted on a drug charge related to large-scale marijuana-grow operation in his residence last fall, was sentenced to six months of home detention in Howard County Circuit Court on Friday. Daniel Earl Sims, formerly of the 14000 block of Triadelphia Rd. pleaded guilty to possession of a controlled dangerous substance with intent to distribute on November 30, 2016.

Police discovered the drugs on May 6 after they were called to mediate a civil dispute. Another man had purchased the property on an online auction and he subsequently discovered that the house was occupied. Officers approaching the house detected the strong odor of fresh marijuana, especially on one side of the dwelling where ventilation fans were operating. Sims answered the front door and told police that he had leased the residence until 2017 through a realty firm.

Tactical officers, along with vice and narcotics detectives returned later that day with a search and seizure warrant for the premises. At the plea hearing last fall, Assistant State's Attorney Maurice Frazier told the court that police discovered "an extremely large, highly sophisticated" operation consisting of advanced lighting, ventilation and watering systems. The basement was divided into rooms where marijuana plants were sorted and cultivated based on the plants' growth stage. Police also seized a metal safe containing \$75,000 in cash.

At Sims' sentencing hearing his defense attorney sought a sentence of probation before judgment from Judge William V. Tucker. Sims told the judge that he was sorry and ashamed, and indicated his goal was to work in the medical cannabis industry. Judge Tucker observed, "You were jumping the gun," and sentenced Sims to five years in prison, suspending all but six months of house arrest. Sims, who served 50 days in jail subsequent to his arrest, was also fined \$500, ordered to pay court costs and placed on two years of supervised probation. Maryland's medical marijuana program is not expected to begin its operational phase until later this year.

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